



Fun Miles joins the campaign for HIV/AIDS Awareness during Carnival

On Tuesday afternoon, February 6, Mr. Dave Martinus, the General Manager of Fun Miles, a shopping awards program on Aruba and the Netherland Antilles, announced that the company is participating in the annual HIV/AIDS Awareness campaign of the Women's Club of Aruba that takes place during the Carnival season.

This year, the Family Planning Foundation is also joining in a special campaign, aimed at island youth, which will not only target HIV/AIDS prevention, but also teenage pregnancy. The Carnival season is a time in Aruba of several wonderful events with a party atmosphere, during which the consumption of alcohol is often excessive. As anywhere, this is an explosive combination, and statistics over the years have shown a rise in both reported cases of HIV/AIDS in the young and underage pregnancies, which are on the rise.

Volunteers of The Women's Club of Aruba have been there during parades in the past distributing condoms to spectators in the hope of increasing responsible sexual behavior, and this year, Fun Miles is donating 20,000 additional Zazoo Condoms for distribution, and sponsoring a campaign to increase responsible sexual conduct all year long.

"Bisti Bo Pechi" or "Wear your hat" is the catch phrase with which they hope to amuse and bring home the important message of condom use. This double-entendre will be found on a poster that will be distributed along with the informative condom pack, and the poster actually turns into a hat imprinted with the "Bisti Bo Pechi" slogan. So there is protection against the sun, and also getting burned in other ways.

Additionally cooperating in this joint effort is the radio station Magic FM 96.5. Their photographer will be in the field during the various events, recording the festivities for their website. Anyone photographed wearing their AIDS Awareness hat, and then appearing on the Magic FM website is eligible for 250 FREE Fun miles, redeemable at numerous vendors around Aruba. They need only report to the Fun Miles office on Avenida Milo Croes with their Fun Miles card or join the program to reap the rewards.

During Tuesday's press conference, Dave Martinus, along with Vanessa Tromp of The Women's Club and Dorothy Kock of Family Planning emphasized that the greatest rewards of this campaign will be increased "safe sex" practices by Aruba's youth. Volunteers from the Junior Chamber International (JCI) will be distributing the condom packets at the final queen election this Friday evening and all succeeding major events. "We hope that more private companies will join us in sponsoring the important work of The Women's Club and Family Planning," expressed Mr. Martinus. "It is important that merchants all assume responsibility and contribute to the community. With this "Bisti Bo Pechi" campaign we hope to insure a better future by assisting these fine organizations in their important work, and that this campaign will help to bring increased awareness to all the public."

Vanessa Tromp also expressed the gratitude of The Women's Club for the financial and moral support of Fun Miles. Joining the Fun Miles Company in this campaign is the fledgling Insel Airlines, which is raffling fifteen round trip tickets to any of their destinations as part of the "Bisti Bo Pechi" AIDS Awareness campaign. Details and rules governing the raffle are available at the Fun Miles office.

"We are very grateful to Fun Miles and Insel Air for their assistance in bringing home the message of always "wearing your hat" for protection and prevention," stated Ms. Tromp. "We hope that other companies will join them in their concern for the public, and in particular the health and welfare of our youth. The Women's Club and Family Planning are all for the celebration and enjoyment of Carnival activities, but with common sense. Hopefully, with this campaign, we will see many less cases reported of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases in the months after the events."

All the organizations involved remind the public that during Carnival, things get "Hot! Hot! Hot!" so everyone should make sure to be "Wearing your hat!" whenever you need it!